GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:303
ANSWERED ON:05.08.2002
SALINITY OF SOIL
BHAVNA DEVRAJ CHIKHALIA

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether increase in salinity of soil is a cause of concern to agriculturists in the country and particularly in Gujarat;

(b) if so, the land that has been rendered useless for agriculture due to salinity of soil during the last three years, State-wise; and

(c) the steps the Government propose to take to check the same?

Answer

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH)

(a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFFERED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (C) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.303 DUE FOR REPLY ON 5TH AUGUST, 2002.

(a) Yes, Sir. Increase in salinity in both coastal and inland areas has been a matter of concern to the agriculturists in the country including Giujarat. Enhanced exploitation of ground water in the coastal region has resulted in subsurface seawater intrusion deteriorating thr quality of ground water. It causes accumulation of soluble soils in the soil surface causing salinity. Besides, drainage congestion in the river basins, seepage in the canal system, cyclonic storms and tidal effect of the sea are the factors for soil salinity. Excess soil salinity causes uneven and stunted growth of crops and leads to poor yields, the extent depending on the degree of salinity.

v (b) As per the available estimates, an area of 50.51 lakh ha. in the country is affected by soil salinity out of which Gujarat accounts for 12.16 lakh ha. The State-wise distribution of saline soils in the country is annexed.

(c) A Joint Central Team was constituted by the Ministry of Agriculture comprising members from Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR), Ministry of Water Resources and Department of Agriculture and Cooperation. The Team visited the States of West Bengal, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh during February to April, 2000. Based on the recommendations of the Team, the State Governments were requested to submit pilot project proposals in the high priority problem areas. A combined project proposal namely `Project on Reclamation of Saline Soils including Coastal Saline - Phase-I` for the States of Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat and Orissa was formulated and submitted to Planning Commission for consideration as a Central Sector Scheme. However, the Planning Commission did not support the proposal, suggesting instead, that the States, if they so desired, could undertake such programmes under the macro management scheme, wherein the States prepare their Work Plans according to their priorities and submit to the Government of India for funding. The States did not avail of this option. Government of Gujarat has now separately submitted a pilot project proposal namely `Prevention of Salinity Ingress in Coastal Areas of Saurashtra Region of Gujarat` for reclamation of 30,661 ha. at a cost of 59.80 crores. This project has been recommended to Planning Commission by this Ministry.

STATE-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF ESTIMATED AREA UNDER SALINE SOIL

(Area in lakh ha.)

Sl.No.	State	Total
1.	Andhra Pradesh	5.88
2.	Gujarat	12.16

3. Haryana 5.00

4. Karnataka 0.99

5. Kerala 0.67
6. Madhya Pradesh 0.67

7 Maharashtra 3.51

8. Orissa 2.54

9. Rajasthan 4.24
10 Tamil Nadu 4.70
11 U.P 1.95
12 West Bengal 8.20

Total 50.51